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## A revision of the endemic South African sac spider genus *Lessertina* Lawrence, 1942 (Araneae: Eutichuridae)

CHARLES R. HADDAD

*Department of Zoology & Entomology, University of the Free State, P.O. Box 339, Bloemfontein 9300, South Africa.*

*E-mail: haddadcr@ufs.ac.za*

### Abstract

The endemic South African sac spider genus *Lessertina* Lawrence, 1942, previously known only from the type species (*L. mutica* Lawrence, 1942), is revised. Both sexes of *L. mutica* are redescribed and the species is recorded from the Eastern Cape, KwaZulu-Natal and Limpopo Provinces. A new species, *L. capensis* **sp. nov.**, is described from the Eastern and Western Cape Provinces.

**Key words:** Corinnidae, forest, leaf litter, new species

### Introduction

*Lessertina* Lawrence, 1942 is a hitherto monotypic genus of sac spiders endemic to the eastern and south-eastern parts of South Africa. The type species, *L. mutica* Lawrence, 1942, was initially described from the male only, and the female remained unknown until recently described by Bosselaers & Jocqué (2000). The placement of the genus has remained quite stable since its description: it was initially described in the Clubionidae (Lawrence 1942), and subsequently listed in Clubionidae: Corinninae (Roewer 1954; Brignoli 1983), Corinnidae (Platnick 1989, 1993, 1997, 2013) and Corinnidae: Corinninae (Dippenaar-Schoeman & Jocqué 1997). Following the first redescription of *L. mutica*, Bosselaers & Jocqué (2000) considered it Corinnidae *incertae sedis*, due to conflicting characteristics with a placement in Corinninae and Trachelinae.

During a subsequent cladistic analysis of Corinnidae and Liocranidae, they proposed that the genus belonged to Trachelinae (Bosselaers & Jocqué 2002). This placement could partly be attributed to the similarity in leg spination and female epigyne structure with other Trachelinae, as well as the interpretation of the ventral terminal spines on the anterior metatarsi as being cusps. While these structures are indeed atypically short for leg spines and could be easily mistaken for cusps, the SEM work included in the current study shows that these structures are homologous with the spines found elsewhere on the legs, which are all very short, irrespective of the leg segments on which they occur (Figs 9–12).

As part of a recent phylogenetic analysis of the Dionychan spiders, Ramírez (2014) found that *Lessertina* was, in fact, not related to any of the Corinnidae subfamilies, and transferred the genus to the Eutichuridae, newly elevated from subfamily level in Miturgidae, where it had been placed by Ramírez *et al.* (1997). Jocqué & Dippenaar-Schoeman (2006) considered this placement of Eutichurinae contentious, and felt that at least the Eutichurinae, and perhaps several other genera and/or subfamilies of Miturgidae, may need to be transferred elsewhere, a sentiment supported by the works of Deeleman-Reinhold (2001), Silva (2003) and Bonaldo *et al.* (2012).

Following this most recent placement, synapomorphies of the Eutichuridae are the ALE and PME tapeta that are considered primitive (with many holes) and the abdomen that lacks strong dorsal curved setae anteriorly. While most female Eutichuridae lack cylindrical gland spigots on the spinnerets, including *Lessertina* (Figs 22, 23), they are present in *Eutichurus* Simon, 1897 and *Macerio* Simon, 1897 on both the PMS and PLS (Ramírez 2014). Within Eutichuridae, *Lessertina* can be considered most closely related to the genera *Cheiracanthium* C.L. Koch,



**FIGURE 33.** Distribution of *Lessertina mutica* Lawrence, 1942 (circles) and *L. capensis* sp. nov. (triangles) in South Africa, indicating the extent of the Cape Floristic Region Centre of Endemism (CFR) and the Maputaland-Pondoland-Albany Centre of Endemism (MPA).

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